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The 7 Weirdest Things We Learned About Eminem's 'Revival'

Regina Spektor, mumble rap, and famous farms all make an appearance

By Charles Holmes

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December 15, 2017 / 6:12 PM

Eminem's Revival is a chaotic trip into the mind of one of rap's greatest stars and enigmas.

Throughout its 77 minutes, Revival exposes Eminem in various shades of politically defiant, horny, and vulnerable. Thematically, the name of the album could represent Em's personal need to breathe new life into these various attributes that have set his music apart in a single project. The Detroit rapper has a lot of stans to please, and it sounds like Eminem is well aware of the challenge at hand on his first studio album since 2013's The Marshall Mathers LP 2.

In the lead-up before the album's release on December 15, many of the project's contributors — including collaborator Ed Sheeran and producers Rick Rubin and Denaun Porter — described how they helped Eminem realize his vision, all weighing in on what it takes to create the cultural behemoth of an Eminem album. Here are some of the stories, tidbits, and Easter eggs that give context to Mathers' latest creative offering.

Adele Was Supposed To Join Eminem On "Walk On Water"

Beyoncé carries her stunning feature on "Walk On Water" with her trademark excellence, but she wasn't the first choice to sing the Skylar Grey-penned hook. Porter, a longtime Eminem producer and member of D12, revealed that Adele was initially meant to grace the track in an interview with ThisIs50.

"The first person I heard when I heard it was Adele," said Porter. "Right? I was like, 'Yo, this would be cool!' and I think some things could happen with her with her voice, and you know she couldn't do it. So it was a thing where we tried that... But then it got to them using Beyoncé. My mind was already there. There's only a couple people that could pull that off."

Eminem's Frustration With Mumble Rap Influenced "Chloraseptic"

Photo by Lester Cohen/WireImage

The 53rd Annual GRAMMY Awards - Show

On the PHresher-featuring "Chloraseptic," Eminem delivers a pointed critique of modern mainstream hip-hop, and throws various jabs in varying degrees of subtlety at 2017 rap culture. Whether Eminem is rapping in the popularized cadence of Migos or mocking lean consumption with the pointedly titled "Chloraseptic," it isn't hard to detect the direction of Eminem's ire.

In an interview with Malcolm Gladwell on the Broken Record podcast, Rubin discussed the Detroit rapper's difficulty with coming to terms with what some critics call "mumble rap."

"For him, it's a little bit of culture shock, because there's a new wave of hip-hop that's not really what he's about," said Rubin. "So he was just talking to me about how that felt. I could see he was frustrated by it."

Eminem Sampled Mark Wahlberg's Singing For Some Reason

Revival is stuffed to the brim with samples. On "Heat," Eminem thought highlighting Mark Wahlberg's off-key singing from Boogie Nights would be a good idea.

The bizarre samples don't stop there. First, who knew Eminem was such a Regina Spektor fan? Secondly, does hip-hop need more Bette Midler in 2017? The answer is an empathetic yes. And finally, nothing says "Take my protest song seriously!" like the voices of Cheech and Chong. Long live the sample.

Dr. Dre Only Produced One Song

Photo by Kevin Mazur/WireImage

The 53rd Annual GRAMMY Awards - Show

Eminem and Dr. Dre are one of the best rapper/producer duos of all time. In recent years, the two haven't been teaming up as much as fans would like. That trend continues as Dre is only credited with producing "Remind Me (Intro)" with Theron "NEEF-U" Feemster and Trevor Lawrence Jr. on Revival. Unfortunately, the song is less than thirty seconds, and it features minimal rapping from Em.

OnCue Wrote The Bridge On "Like Home"

One of Revival's standout moments is "Like Home," his collaboration with Alicia Keys. One of the artists who played a huge part in shaping the track is OnCue, who received a writing credit after he convinced producer Just Blaze to give him a chance to write for the song.

"I was like, 'Yo, let me write a hook,'" OnCue told DJBooth. "It spiraled from there and ended up being the bridge. Skylar Grey also wrote on [the record] and someone else, on the tail end of the process."

2 Chainz Has An Unreleased Verse On "Chloraspetic"

In one of the funnier moments of the Revival rollout, 2 Chainz took to Instagram to complain about his verse and hook being left off the final cut of "Chloraseptic." In an interview with ThisIs50, PHresher — the rapper that replaced Chainz — revealed that he heard the Atlanta rapper's contribution.

"So I did the verse, and Em is like, 'You know 2 Chainz is on the record too, listen to his verse.' I lost my mind."

In a separate ThisIs50 interview, Porter confirmed the existence of the 2 Chainz verse.

"There's a 2 Chainz verse, for sure," he said. "What happens is, when Em gets locked into a song a certain way, I try not to touch that. I try not to fuck with that...We had 2 Chainz come out, and he was working on the hook. But then the hook didn't turn out the way we wanted it, but the verse was incredible."

Ed Sheeran Recorded "River" On Russell Crowe's Farm

In an interview with Billboard, Sheeran divulged that his contribution to Revival was recorded in one of the weirdest places imaginable.

"I was traveling Australia, and Russell Crowe has a house, this big farm," said Sheeran. "He wasn't staying there, but he said, 'When you travel, just use my house.' So I get to this, it's like a huge farm — has a record studio on it, there's like loads of cool stuff, like horses and stuff. And I get an email from Paul Rosenberg, Eminem's manager, and he says, 'We're gonna start putting the album together. Send in any ideas.'"